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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/905,220	07/12/2001	Yurong Shi	TT4869	5200
34456	7590	09/09/2004	EXAMINER	
TOLER & LARSON & ABEL L.L.P. 5000 PLAZA ON THE LAKE STE 265 AUSTIN, TX 78746			KOSOWSKI, ALEXANDER J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2125	

DATE MAILED: 09/09/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/905,220	Applicant(s) SHI ET AL.	
	Examiner Alexander J Kosowski	Art Unit 2125	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 May 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-7,9-12 and 14-31 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 17-31 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-7,9-12 and 14-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 7 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 July 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

- 1) Claims 1, 4-7, 9-12 and 14-31 are presented for examination in light of the amendment filed 5/21/04.

Claim Objections

- 2) Referring to claim 1, line 3, the phrase "collection plan;" should read --collection plan; and--.

Referring to claim 7, line 4, the phrase "collection plan;" should read --collection plan; and--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Allowable Subject Matter

- 3) Claims 17-31 are allowed.
- 4) The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Referring to claims 17-31, the claims are allowable for the reasons cited by Attorney in the "Remarks" section of the amendment filed 12/4/03.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

- 5) The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

- 6) Claims 1, 4-7, 9-12 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable by Nulman (U.S. Pat 6,303,395), further in view of Arackaparambil (U.S. PG PUB 2002/0156548).

Referring to claim 1, Nulman discloses a method comprising the steps of entering semiconductor process parameters into a statistical process control system and configuring an equipment interface, using the statistical process control system, to collect the semiconductor process parameters (col. 8 lines 5-8 and col. 9 lines 29-31, whereby the MES environment contains a metrology controller, which collects semiconductor process parameters for the SPC system). However, Nulman does not explicitly teach receiving a request from an equipment interface for a data collection plan, nor that configuring includes providing the data collection plan to the equipment interface.

Arackaparambil teaches receiving requests from equipment interfaces for data collection plans and configuring the equipment interface by providing the data collection plan (Paragraphs 0095-0097).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to receive a request from an equipment interface for a data collection plan and to provide the data collection plan to the equipment interface in the method taught by Nulman since an equipment interface allows sending commands or messages to and from a tool (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0095), and since establishing a data collection plan allows the plan to be utilized for multiple different tools which are desired to collect the same types of data (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 4, Nulman discloses a statistical process control system (col. 6 lines 56-60) whereby process parameters are entered (col. 8 lines 5-8). However, Nulman does not disclose the step of selecting entering parameters includes referencing a data collection capability specification.

Arackaparambil teaches configuring an equipment interface by providing a data collection plan (Paragraphs 0095-0097). Arackaparambil also teaches accessing tool capabilities (Paragraph 0097).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize a data collection capability specification in the method taught by Nulman since an equipment interface allows sending commands or messages to and from a tool (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0095), and since establishing a data collection plan allows the plan to be utilized for multiple different tools which are desired to collect the same types of data (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 5, Nulman discloses measuring a process parameter on a semiconductor wafer, and providing the process parameter to the statistical process control system through the equipment interface (col. 8 lines 5-8 and col. 9 lines 29-31). However, Nulman does not explicitly teach that the process parameter is measured in accordance with a data collection plan.

Arackaparambil teaches configuring equipment for measurements by providing a data collection plan (Paragraphs 0095-0097).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize a data collection plan in the method taught by Nulman since an equipment interface allows sending commands or messages to and from a tool (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0095), and since establishing a data collection plan allows the plan to be utilized for multiple different tools which are desired to collect the same types of data (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 6, Nulman discloses that the step of measuring includes providing a trigger to a metrology tool from a manufacturing execution system (col. 7 lines 53-67 and col. 8 lines 1-14, whereby the MES encompasses the metrology controller, which triggers metrology tools to collect process parameters).

Referring to claim 7, Nulman discloses a method comprising the steps of establishing a data collection plan using a statistical process control system, the data collection plan identifying data to collect from a semiconductor tool (col. 8 lines 5-8 and col. 9 lines 29-31, whereby the metrology controller must request information from the various metrology tools, and whereby the controller must be programmed for data collection parameters such as a desired sampling frequency, etc.), and providing the data collection plan to an equipment interface of the semiconductor tool through the statistical process control system (col. 8 lines 5-8 and col. 9 lines 29-31, whereby the MES environment contains a metrology controller, which collects semiconductor process parameters for the SPC system). However, Nulman does not explicitly teach receiving a request from an equipment interface to receive a data collection plan, nor that the data collection plan is provided to an equipment interface in response to receiving the request from the equipment interface.

Arackaparambil teaches receiving requests from equipment interfaces for data collection plans and configuring the equipment interface by providing the data collection plan (Paragraphs 0095-0097).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to receive a request from an equipment interface for a data collection plan and to provide the data collection plan to the equipment interface in the method taught by Nulman since

Art Unit: 2125

an equipment interface allows sending commands or messages to and from a tool (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0095), and since establishing a data collection plan allows the plan to be utilized for multiple different tools which are desired to collect the same types of data (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 9, Nulman discloses a statistical process control system (col. 6 lines 56-60). However, Nulman does not explicitly teach that the step of establishing includes referencing a data collection capability specification.

Arackaparambil teaches configuring an equipment interface by providing a data collection plan (Paragraphs 0095-0097). Arackaparambil also teaches accessing tool capabilities (Paragraph 0097).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize a data collection capability specification in the method taught by Nulman since an equipment interface allows sending commands or messages to and from a tool (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0095), and since establishing a data collection plan allows the plan to be utilized for multiple different tools which are desired to collect the same types of data (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 10, Nulman does not explicitly teach the step of performing a measurement consistent with a data collection plan.

Arackaparambil teaches the use of a data collection plan for measurements (Paragraph 0097).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to perform a measurement consistent with a data collection plan in the method taught

Art Unit: 2125

by Nulman since an equipment interface allows sending commands or messages to and from a tool (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0095), and since establishing a data collection plan allows the plan to be utilized for multiple different tools which are desired to collect the same types of data (Arackaparambil, Paragraph 0097).

Referring to claim 11, Nulman discloses that the step of performing a measurement includes providing a trigger to a metrology tool from a manufacturing execution system (col. 7 lines 53-67 and col. 8 lines 1-14, whereby the MES encompasses the metrology controller, which triggers metrology tools to collect process parameters).

Referring to claims 12 and 14-16, the claims vary from claims 7 and 9-11 only in that they claim a computer readable medium tangibly embodying a program of instructions, rather than a method. The method taught by Nulman could inherently be applied to a computer readable medium tangibly embodying a program of instructions. Therefore, referring to claims 12 and 14-16, see rejection of claims 7 and 9-11, respectively, above.

Response to Arguments

7) All arguments from the amendment filed 5/21/04 are rendered moot in view of the new office action above.

Conclusion

8) Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexander J Kosowski whose telephone number is 703-305-3958. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, alternating Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Leo Picard can be reached on 703-308-0538. The fax phone number for the

Application/Control Number: 09/905,220

Page 8

Art Unit: 2125

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306. In addition, the examiner's RightFAX number is 703-746-8370.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

Alexander J. Kosowski
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2125

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. P. Picard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

LEO PICARD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100